

- (g.) To order the attendance of apprentices at technical schools either in their own time, or, if sufficient facilities for complete training are not provided by an employer, in the employer's time. (In two industries the apprentices in the locality were ordered to attend the technical schools (in their own time), extra remuneration being provided for upon their obtaining satisfactory certificates as to the progress made; no orders have been reported requiring employers to give time off to their apprentices to attend the schools.)
- (h.) To order examinations of apprentices. (No specific orders appear to have been made, although the question has been under consideration.)
- (k.) To visit and inquire at any place where apprentices are employed as to the progress of the apprentices. If the committee delegates its powers in this respect it must be to one member each representing the employers and the workers acting together. (Forty-one such visits have been reported.) The Act also empowers the various District Registrars to visit employers' places of business for the purpose of seeing whether the Act, regulations, and orders of the Court or committees are being complied with, and, as there is at times some hesitation on the part of one employer (member of a committee) to inspect the work of another employer, the District Registrars are occasionally asked to make the inspections desired by the committees. (Accordingly some sixty-eight inspections have been made by District Registrars, in addition to those made by them in the course of their general inspection of factories, &c.)

There is a right of appeal by any party affected against the decision of a committee. (No appeals have so far been made.)

Other provisions: Section 8 requires that every apprenticeship to which the Act applies shall, if in order, be registered by the District Registrar of Apprentices. (Under this provision 1,560 new apprenticeship contracts were registered during the year.) The District Registrar may refuse to register in any case if he considers the Act or regulations, or any order of the Court or committee, has not been complied with. (Six applications were refused on these grounds.) He may also, if he thinks fit for any other reason, withhold registration and refer the question to the committee (or the Court if there is no committee), and shall be guided by their decision. (In one instance an application for registration was referred to the committee, and finally refused on the ground that the industry proposed was not a suitable one for the boy to learn.)

There is a right of appeal to the Court against all refusals to register. (There have been no such appeals.)

While the Court and committees are empowered to take the various steps above mentioned, the duty of taking proceedings for breaches of the Act, regulations, orders, &c., is vested in the Registrar and District Registrars. (There have been two such proceedings; a conviction was obtained in one case and the other was withdrawn, a satisfactory explanation being made.)

Section 10 empowers two or more employers in the same industry and locality to jointly take apprentices; this was enacted to meet the case of intermittent trades like the building trade, where perhaps one employer might not be able to continuously train apprentices. (No such steps have so far been taken.)

Section 11 empowers a committee (or the Court) to authorize special contracts of apprenticeship in the cases of adults or of other persons already possessing some knowledge of an industry; the duty of the committee (or the Court) in such a case is to see, for example, that undue advantage is not taken by an employer by thus obtaining the services of an adult at the wages and other conditions fixed for boys. (As already mentioned, three such special contracts have been approved.)

Section 18 enables the Registrar or any District Registrar to obtain from the head teacher of any school a report on each child leaving the school to enter employment, showing the standard passed, his attainments, and so on. Reports upon the boys that might be found to have left the public schools when the schools were to open in February were accordingly called for from all the schools in the sixteen chief towns of the Dominion. On account of the infantile-paralysis epidemic the schools were not reopened for several months, and it was therefore impossible for head teachers to ascertain until after the schools were reopened which boys would have left the schools. Some 2,761 reports were, however, eventually received, and each boy reported on or his parent was asked to fill in a form showing what occupation the boy had taken up or wished to enter. Many of those who had already entered employment failed to reply, but so far as the data go they show that 483, or 27 per cent. entered the commercial and professional pursuits (in which about 22 per cent. of the male working population are engaged), and 1,169, or 66 per cent. entered the primary and secondary occupations (in which about 62 per cent. of the population are employed); of the remainder, 121 are shown as having taken up transport and other unskilled and miscellaneous work, 613 entered higher schools, and 374 were undecided as to what they should do. The question of definitely ascertaining the proportions of the boys that enter the above groups of occupations is one of importance to the welfare of the boys and of the community generally, and steps will therefore be again taken at the beginning of next year to obtain reliable information on the subject, in order that if it is found that a large number of the boys are taking up occupations—particularly of a non-productive nature—in which there is not likely to be permanent employment the position may be made generally known.

Section 21 of the Act contains a provision that is entirely new—viz., that, if a majority of the employers in an industry and locality desire that young persons may receive technical training in an institution, either one established for the purpose or one already in existence such as a technical